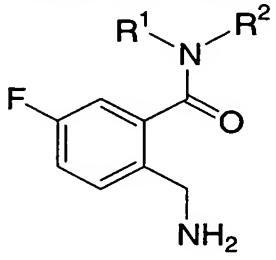
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

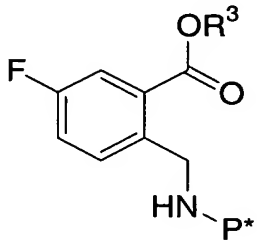
1. A process for preparing a benzamide compound of Formula (VII):



(VII)

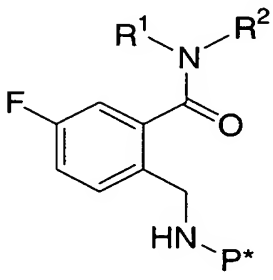
which comprises:

(Y) reacting a benzoate compound of Formula (V):



(V)

with an amine of formula R^1R^2NH in a solvent Y to obtain a benzamide compound of Formula (VI):



(VI) ; and

(Z) treating the benzamide compound of Formula (VI) with an amine deprotecting agent to obtain the benzamide compound of Formula (VII);

wherein:

R^1 and R^2 are each independently:

(1) -H,

(2) -C_{1-6} alkyl, optionally substituted with from 1 to 5 substituents each of which is independently -OH, -O-C_{1-6} alkyl, -CN, -NO_2, -$N(R^a)R^b$, -$C(=O)N(R^a)R^b$, -$SO_2N(R^a)R^b$, -$N(R^a)C(=O)R^b$, -$N(R^a)CO_2R^c$, -$N(R^a)SO_2R^c$, -$N(R^a)SO_2N(R^a)R^b$, -$OC(=O)N(R^a)R^b$, or -$N(R^a)C(=O)N(R^a)R^b$,

(3) -C_{3-6} cycloalkyl, optionally substituted with from 1 to 4 substituents each of which is independently -C_{1-4} alkyl or -O-C_{1-4} alkyl, or

(4) aryl, optionally substituted with from 1 to 6 substituents each of which is independently halogen, -C_{1-4} alkyl, -O-C_{1-4} alkyl, -CN, -$N(R^a)R^b$, -$C(=O)N(R^a)R^b$, -$SO_2N(R^a)R^b$, -$N(R^a)C(=O)R^b$, -$N(R^a)CO_2R^c$, -$N(R^a)SO_2R^c$, -$(CH_2)_{1-2}$-O-C_{1-4} alkyl, -$(CH_2)_{1-2}$-CN, -$(CH_2)_{1-2}$-$N(R^a)R^b$, -$(CH_2)_{1-2}$-$C(=O)N(R^a)R^b$, -$(CH_2)_{1-2}$-$SO_2N(R^a)R^b$, -$(CH_2)_{1-2}$-$N(R^a)C(=O)R^b$, -$(CH_2)_{1-2}$-$N(R^a)CO_2R^c$, -$(CH_2)_{1-2}$-$N(R^a)SO_2R^c$, phenyl, or -$(CH_2)_{1-2}$-phenyl;

R^3 is -C_{1-6} alkyl, -C_{1-6} alkyl-aryl, or aryl;

P* is an amino protective group;

each R^a is independently -H, -C_{1-6} alkyl, or -C_{3-6} cycloalkyl;

each R^b is independently -H, -C_{1-6} alkyl, or -C_{3-6} cycloalkyl; and

each R^c is independently -C_{1-6} alkyl or -C_{3-6} cycloalkyl.

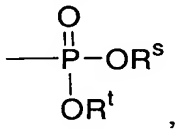
2. The process according to claim 1, wherein R^1 and R^2 are each independently -H, -C_{1-6} alkyl, -C_{3-6} cycloalkyl, or aryl.

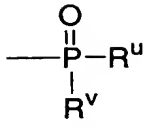
3. The process according to claim 1, wherein P* is

(1) -$C(=O)$-O-C_{1-6} alkyl,

(2) -$C(=O)$-O-CH_2-aryl,

(3) -$C(=O)$-O-$(CH_2)_{0-1}$-$CH=CH_2$,

(4)  , or

(5)  ;

wherein R^s and R^t are each independently -C_{1-6} alkyl, -CH_2-aryl, or aryl ; and

R^u and R^v are each independently an aryl group.

4. The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction in Step Y is conducted at a temperature in a range of from about 50 to about 200 °C.

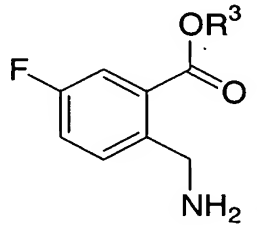
5. The process according to claim 1, wherein the amine of formula R^1R^2NH is employed in Step Y in an amount in a range of from about 1 to about 200 equivalents per equivalent of benzoate compound V.

6. The process according to claim 1, wherein the solvent Y is selected from the group consisting of aromatic hydrocarbons, halogenated aliphatic hydrocarbons, alcohols, ethers, and nitriles.

7. The process according to claim 1, wherein P* is an amino protective group capable of being cleaved by an acid and the amine deprotecting agent in Step Z comprises an acid Z that is employed in an amount in a range of from about 0.1 to about 100 equivalents per equivalent of benzamide compound VI; and the treatment in Step Z is conducted at a temperature in a range of from about -50 to about 150°C.

8. The process according to claim 1, which further comprises:

(X) treating a benzoate compound of Formula (IV):



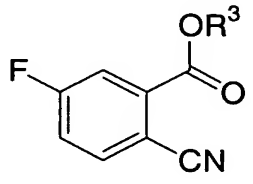
(IV)

with an amine protecting agent containing the group P* in a solvent X to obtain the benzoate

compound of Formula (V).

9. The process according to claim 8, which further comprises:

(W) hydrogenating a benzonitrile of Formula (III):

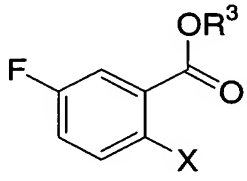


(III)

in a solvent W and in the presence of a transition metal catalyst to obtain the benzoate compound of Formula (IV).

10. The process according to claim 9, which further comprises:

(V) reacting a halobenzoate compound of Formula (II):

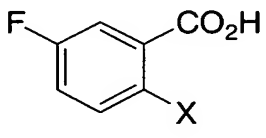


(II)

in an aprotic solvent V with a cyanide compound selected from the group consisting of CuCN and $Zn(CN)_2$ to obtain the benzonitrile of Formula (III); with the proviso that when the cyanide compound is $Zn(CN)_2$, the reaction is conducted in the presence of a Pd compound and an activating ligand; wherein X is chloro, bromo, or iodo.

11. The process according to claim 10, which further comprises:

(U) esterifying a benzoic acid of Formula (I):

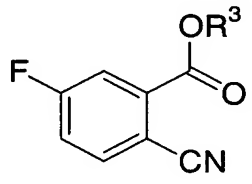


(I)

with an alcohol of formula R^3-OH optionally in the presence of an acid U to obtain the halobenzoate compound of Formula (II).

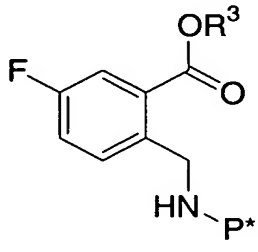
12. The process according to claim 1, wherein P* is BOC, ALLOC, or CBZ; and wherein the process further comprises:

(XA) hydrogenating a benzonitrile of Formula (III):



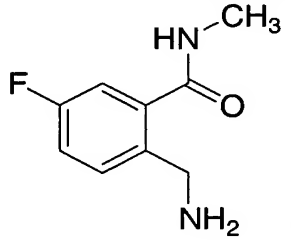
(III)

in a solvent XA, in the presence of (i) $(BOC)_2O$, $(ALLOC)_2O$, or $(CBZ)_2O$ and (ii) Raney nickel, and optionally in the presence of a base to obtain a benzoate compound of Formula (V):



(V).

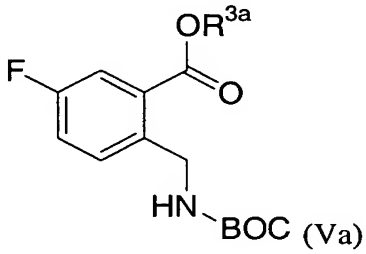
13. A process for preparing Compound 7:



7

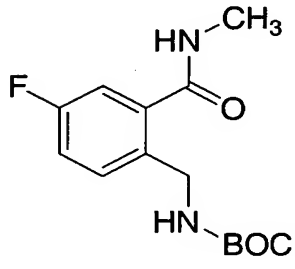
which comprises:

(yy) reacting a benzoate compound of Formula (Va):



(Va)

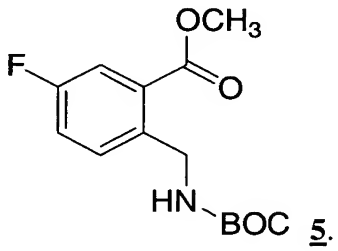
with methylamine in a solvent yy to obtain Compound **6**:



6 ; and

(zz) treating the Compound **6** with an acid zz to obtain the Compound **7**; wherein R^{3a} is -C_{1-6} alkyl.

14. The process according to claim 13, wherein the benzoate compound of Formula (Va) is Compound **5**:



5.

15. The process according to claim 13, wherein:

the reaction in Step yy is conducted at a temperature in the range of from about 75 to 150°C;

methylamine is employed in Step yy in an amount in a range of from about 1.5 to about 5 equivalents per equivalent of Compound Va;

the solvent yy is selected from the group consisting of alcohols, ethers, and aromatic hydrocarbons

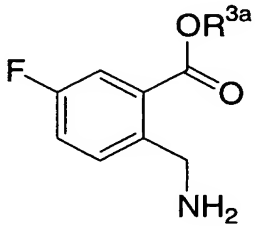
the acid zz is HCl;

the acid zz is employed in Step zz in an amount in a range of from about 3 to about 15 equivalents per equivalent of Compound **6**; and

the treatment in Step zz is conducted in a solvent zz which is an C_{1-6} alkyl ester of a C_{1-6} alkylcarboxylic acid.

16. The process according to claim 13, which further comprises (xx)

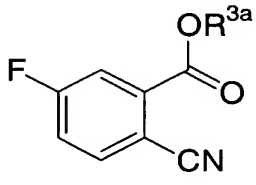
treating a benzoate compound of Formula (IVa):



(IVa)

with an amine protecting agent containing the BOC group in a solvent xx to obtain the benzoate compound of Formula (Va).

17. The process according to claim 16, which further comprises (ww) hydrogenating a benzonitrile of Formula (IIIa):

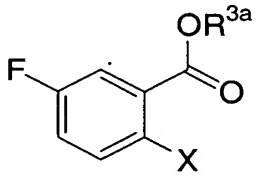


(IIIa)

in a solvent ww and in the presence of a transition metal catalyst to obtain the benzoate compound of Formula (IVa).

18. The process according to claim 17, which further comprises:

(vv) reacting a halobenzoate compound of Formula (IIa):

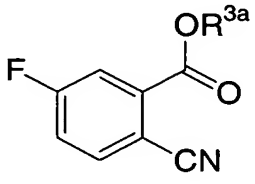


(IIa)

in an aprotic solvent vv with a cyanide compound selected from the group consisting of CuCN and $Zn(CN)_2$ to obtain the benzonitrile of Formula (IIIa); with the proviso that when the cyanide compound is $Zn(CN)_2$, the reaction is conducted in the presence of a Pd compound and an activating ligand; wherein X is chloro, bromo, or iodo.

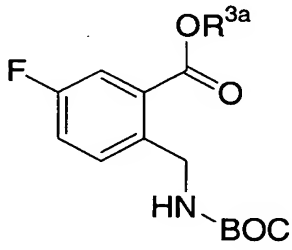
19. The process according to claim 13, which further comprises:

(xxa) hydrogenating a benzonitrile of Formula (IIIa):



(IIIa)

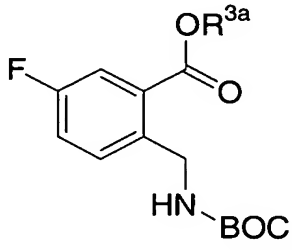
in a solvent xxa, in the presence of $(BOC)_2O$ and Raney nickel, and optionally in the presence of a base to obtain a benzoate compound of Formula (Va):



(Va) .

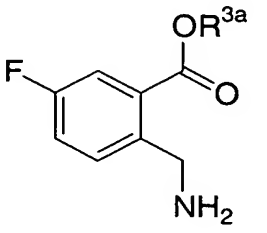
20. A compound selected from the group consisting of:

a compound of Formula (Va):



(Va),

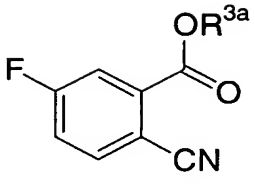
a compound of Formula (IVa):



(IVa) ,

a salt of a compound of Formula (IVa), and

a compound of Formula (IIIa):



(IIIa);

wherein R^{3a} is -C_{1-6} alkyl.